

ORALHEALTH*ri*

A Quarterly Oral Health Newsletter of the Rhode Island Department of Health

Patricia A. Nolan, MD, MPH
Director, RI Department of Health

March 2002, Volume I, Number I

Lincoln Almond
Governor

Message from the Director

Our mouths are a vital part of our health and well-being!

A healthy mouth is essential to basic nutrition and to healthy eating. Painful, infected gums and teeth disrupt our lives, reducing our ability to learn or work productively. Cancers of the mouth are deadly, and tobacco use, alcohol use and certain other diseases raise the risk of these cancers.

Promoting oral health is an important role of the Rhode Island Department of Health (HEALTH). For too long we have been poorly equipped and funded to carry out our role. Our weakness reflects a lack of access to dental care in our communities for those who are poor, who are elderly, and those who have limited mobility. Worse, it reflects a lack of resources committed to oral health promotion through healthy eating, avoiding tobacco use and preventing oral injuries.

Under the tireless guidance of Robin Lawrence, DMD, our oral health program is recovering. This newsletter brings you, our partners in promoting oral health in Rhode Island, current oral health news and scientific information. We hope that our renewed efforts will encourage a coordinated effort among our medical and

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Oral Health Redux

After an absence of nearly a decade, oral health has returned to the Rhode Island Department of Health. In 1998, the Departments of Education and Health received funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to provide oral disease prevention services for school-aged children using school-based or school-linked oral health programs. The resulting program, the *Healthy Schools! Healthy Kids!* Oral Health Initiative, was the initial step in the revitalization of oral health programming at the Department. Assisted by an advisory group of oral health stakeholders from the public, private, and not-for-profit sectors, the CDC funding was instrumental in the rebirth of the oral health infrastructure at the Department. *The Special Senate Commission to Study and Make Recommendations on Ways to Maintain and Expand Access to Quality Oral Health Care for All Rhode Island Residents*, championed and chaired by Senator Elizabeth Roberts, was the defining moment in the revival of oral health at the Department. Meeting from November 2000 to May 2001, the Commission's final report articulated 22 recommendations in three areas: Oral Health Care Access, Oral Disease Prevention, and Oral Health Professions Workforce. The Department, with a mission of improving the oral health of all Rhode Islanders, is undertaking an ambitious five-year strategic plan addressing those rec-

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Oral Health Report Card Released

A recent study conducted by the advocacy group Oral Health America gave the nation a "C" grade on overall dental. The report card is based on data obtained from American Academy of Pediatrics, Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, Health Care Financing Administration/Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services Administration, and the National Cancer Institute. The report card is intended to call policymakers' attention to oral health needs across the country by grading states in four oral health categories:

- (1) prevention,
- (2) access to care,
- (3) oral health leadership, and
- (4) oral health status.

States received some of their lowest grades in the areas of prevention and access to care. The report, *Filling the Gaps*, is available at <http://www.oralhealthamerica.org>

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Rhode Island Oral Health Professional Advisory Council

The Rhode Island Department of Health has established the Oral Health Professional Advisory Council with a mission of advising the Department in the implementation of its oral health strategic plan and the *Special Senate Commission on Access to Quality Oral Health Care* recommendations. The Council is comprised of 15 oral health professionals representing key stakeholder institutions/organizations/agencies from the public, private, and not-for-profit sectors with an interest in improving the oral health of all Rhode Islanders.

The inaugural quarterly meeting of the Council was convened February 27, 2002. Patricia Nolan, MD, MPH (Director, Rhode Island Department of Health) initiated the meeting with an inspiring keynote address emphasizing the Department's commitment to oral health

and the importance of oral health in the context of overall health. In her concluding remarks, Dr. Nolan invited the Council to assist the Department in the development of oral health public policy with a mission of improving the oral health of all Rhode Islanders. Dr. Lawrence delivered a presentation *State of the State's Oral Health: Rhode Island 2002*. A lengthy and lively discussion between Council members regarding oral health in Rhode Island followed the presentation and continued through the meeting adjournment.



Subsequent to the meeting, Nicholas Barone, DDS was selected Council Chairperson. Dr. Barone, the Immediate Past-President of the Rhode Island Dental Association, is an orthodontist with a private practice in North Providence. The next Council meeting has been scheduled to convene May 29, 2002.

Members/representing:

Nicholas D. Barone, DDS
Rhode Island Dental Association
M. Christine Benoit, DMD
Rhode Island Dental Association
Diane L. Bourque, RDH, MS
Academic oral health programs
Donna M. Hagerty, DDS
School dentists
Daniel J. Kane, DMD
Hospital-based oral health programs
Andrew J. Molak, DMD
Rhode Island Dental Association
Diane T. Monti-Markowski, DMD, MBA
Private insurers
Pamela Nelson, RDH

Rhode Island Dental Hygienists' Association

Susan R. Perlini, RDH

Rhode Island Dental Hygienists' Association

Christine M. Ramalho, DMD

Community health center-based oral health programs

George A. Resnevic, DMD

Board of Examiners in Dentistry

Judith A. Rosati, COMSA

Rhode Island Dental Assistants' Association

Sandra D. Saunders, RDH, MS, MPH

Academic oral health programs

Shirley A. Spater, DMD, MPH

Hospital-based oral health programs

Rodney P. Thomas, DMD

Private insurers

Administrative and technical support for the Council will be provided by Rhode Island Department of Health staff:

D. Alison Buckser, MPH

Senior Public Health Promotion Specialist, Office of Primary Care

Robin M. Lawrence, DDS, MPH

Chief, Office of Dental Public Health

Mary Anne Miller, RN, MPH

Chief, Office of Primary Care

Maureen E. Ross, RDH, BS

Oral Health Program Manager, Office of Primary Care

Editorial Policy

ORALHEALTHri is published quarterly by the Rhode Island Department of Health. This publication was supported by Cooperative Agreement Number 99071 from the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC). Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the CDC. It is also available on the World Wide Web at www.health.state.ri.us/disease/primarycare/oralhealth/home.htm.



Comments? Questions?

Articles, ideas, and announcements from readers are welcome. Contact the Oral Health Program at: RI Department of Health, Three Capitol Hill, Room 408, Providence, RI 02908.

Email: RobinL@doh.state.ri.us

Voice: 401.222.1171

Fax: 401.222.4415

Director's Message

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health at every opportunity with our patients and in our communities. In partnership, we can improve the oral health of all Rhode Islanders in the context of total health.

Our vision is that all people in Rhode Island will have the opportunity to live safe and healthy lives in safe and healthy communities. We look forward to working with you.

Patricia A. Nolan, MD, MPH

Patricia A. Nolan, MD, MPH
Director, RI Department of Health

Oral Health Redux

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ommendations and looks forward to working with all committed parties in achieving success. To that end, the Department has established the Oral Health Professional Advisory Council with a mission of advising the Department in the implementation of its oral health strategic plan and the *Special Senate Commission on Access to Quality Oral Health Care* recommendations. The Council is comprised of 15 oral health professionals representing key stakeholder institutions/organizations/agencies from the public, private, and not-for-profit sectors with an interest in improving the oral health of all Rhode Islanders. (See article on page 2.) Additionally, this quarterly newsletter, and the Department's Oral Health web pages (www.healthri.org/disease/primarycare/oralhealth/home.htm), will serve to enhance communication between and among all stakeholders as we seek to realize our dreams.

Robin M. Lawrence, DDS, MPH
Chief, Office of Dental Public Health
RI Department of Health

Pediatric Oral Health Tips Available

The Division of Oral Health of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has released a set of pediatric oral health tips, *Brush Up on Healthy Teeth: Simple Steps for Kids' Smiles*.

The simple steps assist parents in taking care of their children's teeth as well as aid in teaching appropriate dental habits. Proper dental health practices such as drinking fluoridated water and brushing with a "pea-sized" amount of fluoride toothpaste can greatly improve oral health in children. Fluoride works by stopping or even reversing tooth decay. Research has shown that brushing with fluoridated toothpaste lowers the risk of decay by 15-30 percent, and drinking fluoridated water lowers the risk by 18-40 percent.

The educational posters/brochures set, *Brush Up on Healthy Teeth: Simple Steps for Kids' Smiles*, is available at <http://www.cdc.gov/nccddphp/oh/brushup-pr.htm>

New Oral Health Web Page

The Oral Health Program at the Rhode Island Department of Health has just launched its web site. The site has been designed to appeal to four audiences: families and consumers, teachers and schools, oral health professionals and students, and policy makers.

The goals of these web pages are to provide a central site for oral health information in Rhode Island and to provide direction to other sources of oral health information.

Former U.S. Surgeon General David Satcher has noted "...the mouth reflects general health and well-being." It is evident that poor oral health has a negative affect on an individual's ability to grow, learn, and enjoy life to the fullest. Hopefully, this web site will assist users address issues contained in *Oral Health in America: A Report of the Surgeon General*.

At present, some pages are under construction and will be completed by June 2002. Check it out at www.healthri.org/disease/primarycare/oralhealth/home.htm

CDC Endorses Community-Based Caries Prevention

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) issued a strong recommendation for two community-based interventions to prevent tooth decay – community water fluoridation and school dental sealant programs. *Promoting Oral Health: Interventions for Preventing Dental Caries, Oral and Pharyngeal Cancers, and Sports-related Craniofacial Injuries, A Report on the Recommendations of the Task Force on Community Preventive Services* summarizes the recommendations of the independent, non-federal Task Force based on systematic reviews of the scientific evidence of effectiveness for selected community interventions to prevent and control tooth decay, oral and pharyngeal cancers and sports-re-

lated injuries to the head, mouth and face. These conditions are common, sometimes life-threatening, costly and potentially preventable by currently available strategies.

The Task Force found that caries typically decreased by 30-50% after starting or continuing community water fluoridation. Typically, a 60% decrease in occlusal decay follows sealant application. School-based and linked programs in the US generally target vulnerable populations less likely to receive private dental care, such as children eligible for free and reduced lunch programs.

The Task Force review was developed as part of *The Guide to Community Prevention Services* which provides recom-

mendations on population-based interventions to promote health and to prevent disease, injury, disability and premature death, appropriate for use by communities and healthcare systems.

The publication, *Promoting Oral Health: Interventions for Preventing Dental Caries, Oral and Pharyngeal Cancers, and Sports-related Craniofacial Injuries, A Report on the Recommendations of the Task Force on Community Preventive Services*, is available at

www.thecommunityguide.org/Guide/oralhealthfl.html

Announcements

RI Dental Association

What Makes Someone Financially Secure (7 CEUs)

Providence Marriott, Providence, RI

April 3, 2002 @ 9:00AM – 4:00 PM

Communication Breakthrough! A Team Approach to Treatment Acceptance (7 CEUs)

Providence Marriott, Providence, RI

May 15, 2002 @ 9:00AM – 4:00 PM

Fee for Service Dentistry With a Managed Care Component (4 CEUs)

Crowne Plaza Hotel at the Crossings, Warwick, RI

May 22, 2002 @ 8:00 AM – 12:00 Noon

Annual Meeting

Luncheon Speaker: Senator Elizabeth Roberts

Providence Marriott, Providence, RI

May 15, 2002 @ 12:30 PM – 1:30 PM

For further information, contact 401.732.6833.

RI Board of Examiners in Dentistry: Board Meetings

RI Department of Health, Providence, RI

May 22, June 19, July 24, 2002 @ 9:30 AM – 11:30 AM

For further information, contact 401.222.2151

RI Oral Health Professional Advisory Council Meeting

RI Department of Health, Providence, RI

May 29, 2002 @ 7:30 AM – 9:00 AM

For further information, contact 401.222.1171

National Oral Health Conference

Sheraton Ferncroft Resort, Danvers, MA

April 29, 2002 – May 1, 2002

For further information, contact 410.642.1857 or 401.222.1171.

RI Dental Hygienists' Association

Volunteers at St. Joseph Hospital (3 CEUs)

St. Joseph Hospital Pediatric Dental Ctr, Providence, RI

April 6, 2002 @ 9:00 AM – 12:00 Noon

Benefits of Soy (1 CEU)

Radisson Hotel, Warwick, RI

April 30, 2002 @ 6:30 PM – 7:30 PM

Product Trends – Team Night Out (1 CEU)

Radisson Hotel, Warwick, RI

April 30, 2002 @ 7:30 PM – 8:30 PM

Dental Emergencies (1 CEU)

Radisson Hotel, Warwick, RI

April 30, 2002 @ 8:30 PM – 9:30 PM

For further information, contact Pamela Nelson at 401.254.8849.

RI Dental Assistants' Association

Implant Reconstruction: Patients w. Minimal Bone (2 CEUs)

Miriam Hospital, Providence, RI

May 12, 2002 @ 7:00 PM – 9:00 PM

For further information, contact Judy Rosati at 401.423.2497.

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Providence, RI 02908-5097

www.healthri.org

A Healthy Smile Can Last A Lifetime

www.healthri.org/disease/primarycare/oralhealth/home.htm